United Nations

Daily Highlights

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TUESDAY HIGHLIGHTS

+ Rwandan Justice Minister assures Secretary-General that persons charged with grave human rights violations in Rwanda will be given fair trial; says Government is seeking to encourage return of refugees.

+ Mozambican parties give Security Council mission reassurances regarding demobilization of forces and adherence to timetable for upcoming elections.

+ Croatian parties, meeting under auspices of International Conference on Former Yugoslavia, agree to continue talks pursuant to normalization of relations; set up working groups on topics for discussion.

+ Italy signs agreement with United Nations on use of emergency depot at Pisa; to give Department of Humanitarian Affairs 7 billion lira to aid countries in need.

+ WFP to supply $3.9 million worth of food aid to 300,000 people displaced by recent conflict in Yemen.

+ Working Group on Indigenous Populations, concluding twelfth session, recommends that General Assembly proclaim 9 August as International Day of Indigenous People.

+ UNEP issues Code of Ethics on International Trade in Chemicals to help improve safety in private sector.

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Secretary-General Boutros Boutros-Ghali today received assurances from Rwanda's Minister of Justice, Alphonse-Marie Mkubito, that those apprehended for grave human rights violations in his country would be given a fair trial. In a letter to the Secretary-General, Mr. Mkubito said his Government would make every effort to prevent summary executions and other acts of vigilante justice and to arrest those who committed acts of revenge. He hoped such assurances would encourage refugees to return to Rwanda.

(more)

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Mr. Mkubito said there was "credible evidence" that a number of people who had been arrested in Rwanda recently had committed genocide and other grave violations of international humanitarian law. His Government would hold those arrested in conditions consistent with international standards for detention pending prosecution by an international tribunal. He urged the Security Council to take concrete steps to lay the groundwork for the prompt establishment of such a tribunal. It should also ensure that the Commission of Experts set up to investigate grave humanitarian violations in Rwanda issued a report soon.

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The nine-member Security Council mission to Mozambique today had meetings with President Joaquim Chissano, Mozambique National Resistence Movement (RENAMO) President Afonso Dhlakama, and the Chairman of the National Election Commission, B. Mazula. The mission is in the country to discuss how to ensure full and timely implementation of the General Peace Agreement.

President Chissano reassured the mission that demobilization would be completed more or less on time and expressed his Government's determination to maintain the timetable for the October elections. President Dhlakama said RENAMO's demobilization was essentially complete. He expressed confidence that the election dates would be adhered to, but said the registration deadline might be extended so that more people would be able to vote.

Mission Chairman Ibrahim Gambari (Nigeria) later said that most of the elements for the elections were falling into place, but stressed that the international community must help the National Election Commission and the parties to ensure success.

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The International Conference on the Former Yugoslavia today announced that the Croatian Government and the Croatian Serbs had agreed to continue negotiations within the framework of a general normalization of relations. That agreement was reached on Friday in a meeting held at the United Nations Protection Force (UNPROFOR) Headquarters in Knin, under the auspices of the International Conference.

The parties also decided to immediately establish working groups to prepare for negotiations on: humanitarian questions; the opening of the Zagreb-Belgrade highway; the provision of water supplies; pensions and savings rights; the restoration of hydro-electric power systems; the Adriatic oil pipeline; transportation issues; and questions relating to trade.

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The United Nations and Italy today concluded a Memorandum of Understanding regarding contributions for the use of the emergency supply depot at Pisa during 1994. Italy will give the Department of Humanitarian Affairs (DHA) 7 billion lira to help countries or regions in emergency situations. The funds will cover the purchase of relief stocks to be stored

at Pisa, transportation, packing and management costs, as well as other initiatives to be determined jointly by Italy and the DHA.

Following today's signing in Rome, Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs Peter Hansen expressed gratitude for Italy's active role in assisting Rwanda. He noted that its commitments in Mozambique and Rwanda made Italy the largest single contributor to the DHA.

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The World Food Programme (WFP) has announced that it will supply urgently needed food to more than 300,000 people displaced by the recent conflict in Yemen. Almost 11,000 metric tons of food will be delivered over the next two months at a cost of more than $3.9 million. The agency will be working with the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and international non-governmental organizations on a task force set up by the Yemeni Government to coordinate relief activities.

The WFP described the situation in southern Yemen as critical. Two months of intensive fighting around Aden had disrupted electricity and water supplies and halted economic activity, leaving most of the population without income. Some 50,000 people had taken refuge on the outskirts of the city, while thousands more had fled to rural areas, resulting in severe shortages of medicine and basic foods.

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Concluding its twelfth session in Geneva last week, the Working Group on Indigenous Populations recommended that the General Assembly proclaim 9 August as the International Day of Indigenous People. It also requested that indigenous people make a presentation to the Assembly when the International Decade for the World's Indigenous People is launched in December.

The Working Group was established by the Economic and Social Council in 1982 to "give special attention to the evolution of standards concerning the rights of indigenous populations". The session was the most well attended ever, with 790 participants, including 164 indigenous nations, organizations and communities.

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The United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) has issued a Code of Ethics on the International Trade in Chemicals to help improve safety in the private sector. The Code is a voluntary guide to standards of conduct in chemical production and management, with a view to reducing health and environmental risks. It provides specific guidance in seven areas: risk reduction; testing and assessment; quality assurance; classification, packaging and labelling; information provision; education and training; and advertising and marketing.

The Code was developed in response to a 1991 decision of UNEP's Governing Council, and to Agenda 21, the programme of action adopted by the 1992 United Nations Conference on Environment and Development (UNCED).

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